

SOUTHWEST FISHERIES SCIENCE CENTER
FIRST QUARTER REPORT - FY 2006
For the Period October 1 – December 31

Submitted by: Roger Hewitt, Division Director, Fisheries Resources Division

Title of accomplishment or milestone: Co-chairing the 6th Trinational Sardine Forum, December 14-15, 2005, in Ensenada, Mexico

Current status: The forum was successfully completed and an Administration Report of the meeting is being drafted.

Background information: The formation of Trinational Sardine Forum (TSF) was recommended at a three-day sardine symposium at the Scripps Institution of Oceanography, UCSD, May 23-25, 2000 to pool information and contributions from the fishing industry and fishery agencies of the United States, Canada, and Mexico. The goal was to achieve an accurate assessment of the Pacific sardine throughout its range because 1) the fishery independent measures of abundance cover only a fraction of the full range of the population, 2) the sardine fishery takes only a near-shore, often younger, fraction of the stock leaving the offshore fraction of presumably larger and older fish, unsampled, 3) age and growth measurements are confounded by movements along the coast which are presently largely unknown; and 4) basic life table information need to be updated. The first TSF was held in Ensenada, Mexico on November 28-December 2, 2000. The following four Forums were held in either San Diego or San Pedro.

Purpose of Activities: The Forum provided an opportunity to exchange information regarding Pacific sardine issues among the fishing industry, scientists, governments, and academia from Mexico, the U.S. and Canada. The objectives of this forum were to present and discuss current trends and events in the west coast fisheries for sardine and to prepare for the Baja California to British Columbia (B.C. to B.C.) coast-wide survey in April 2006.

Description of accomplishment and significant results: The Forum was well attended this year, with close to 100 participants. The Forum was inaugurated by City Council Member Ing. Nélida Pelayo Ponce, Coordinator of the Local Fisheries Commission. Special guests included Federico Graef Zielh, Director General, Centro de Investigación Científica y de Educación Superior de Ensenada (CICESE) and Dr. William W. Fox, Jr., Director, Southwest Fisheries Science Center, National Marine Fisheries Service. Representatives came from the SWFSC, NWFSC, PFMC, SIO, the States of California and Oregon, Canadian Department of Fisheries and Oceans (DFO), and several from Mexico's CICESE, as well as INP from Ensenada, Mazatlan and La Paz. There were more fishing industry attendees from the three countries than in years past: including six from the U.S. (4 from Pacific Seafood Co.), three from Canada, and many more from Mexico.

In addition to the usual sessions of the Forum, the Regional Sardine Fisheries Reports and Research Plans and Reports, there was a new session on contributed papers and a new working group on industry trends and issues. Most of the scientific papers presented documented the

sardine fisheries and the use of various techniques to understand their reproductive capability, stock structure, and migratory patterns.

Significance of accomplishment: The focus issue for this forum was the coast-wide survey to be held in April 2006 from Baja California to British Columbia. The survey is essential to get a clear picture of the overall biomass and reproduction of the population along the west coast of North America and pave the road for future collaboration among sardine communities from the three countries. Participants provided valuable recommendations on logistics and procedures for the survey. Mexico plans to participate by extending the survey into Baja California and expanding it temporally in the South. Although the Department of Fisheries and Oceans, Canada, will not be able to provide ship time, they will provide additional seagoing personnel. A report on the 6th Trinational Sardine Forum, including abstracts, will be forthcoming shortly. The next meeting of the Forum will be held in Canada in fall, 2006. For future information and past activities, please visit our website: <http://swfsc.nmfs.noaa.gov/frd/Trinational/index.htm>

Problems: None.

Contact: Nancy Lo, 858-546-7123